

**LEMERCIER AND
ESMENARD.**

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usages of the body to which he might belong : he was accordingly elected. The Government candidate was M. Esmenard, who was also elected. The two new members were presented to the Emperor on the same day. On this occasion upwards of 400 persons were present in the *salon*, from one of whom I received these details. When the Emperor saw M. Lemercier, for whom he had long pretended great friendship, he said to him in a kind tone, "Well, Lemercier, you are now installed." Lemercier respectfully bowed to the Emperor, but without uttering a word in reply. Napoleon was mortified at this silence, but without saying anything more to Lemercier he turned to Esmenard, the member who should have been most acceptable to him, and vented upon him the whole weight of his indignation in a manner equally unfeeling and unjust. "Well, Esmenard," said he, "do you still hold your place in the police?" * These words were spoken in so loud a tone as to be heard by all present; and it was doubtless this cruel and ambiguous speech which furnished the enemies of Esmenard with arms to attack his reputation as a man of honor, and to give an appearance of disgrace to those functions which he exercised with so much zeal and ability.

When, at the commencement of 1811, I left Paris, I had ceased to delude myself respecting the brilliant career which seemed opening before me during the Consulate. I clearly perceived that since Bonaparte, instead of receiving me as I expected, had refused to see me at all, the calumnies of my enemies were triumphant, and that I had nothing to hope for from an absolute ruler, whose past injustice rendered him the more unjust. He now possessed what he had so long and

¹ For the connection of Esmenard with the police as editor, etc., see Savary (tome v. p. 15), who praises him highly, and boasts that it was he who got him, and later Chateaubriand, into the Academy. Lemercier, who had been a favored friend of General Bonaparte, withdrew from the Court and sent back his cross of the Legion of Honor on the foundation of the Empire. His writings in the subsequent years were not very successful, even allowing for the restraints of the censorship. "He sent," says Merlet (tome i. p. 263), "his pieces to the censor as a general launches his soldiers to the assault. He thus had more than five great dramas killed under him." Preserving his hostility during the time of Napoleon's power Lemercier seems to have regretted the Restoration, or at least he might have said with Hoffman when then asked why he did not write against Napoleon,

"Be^ cause I have never flattered him."